

Newly formed veterans advisory group on-hand for announcement

In an issue that is “near and dear” to her heart, freshman U. S. Representative Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) is reaffirming her commitment to veterans by introducing the Disabled Veterans’ Health Care Fairness Act, her first bill since elected to Congress. The bill was announced while meeting with her newly formed Veterans Advisory Committee Saturday at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9545 in New Lenox.

At the meeting, members of the committee representing counties in the 11th District welcomed Halvorson’s remarks on the bill, which has been heralded as a bipartisan effort and co-sponsored with 17 members* of Congress. It has received the support of the Blind Veterans of America, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans.

“It’s so great to be with all of you today and I am very pleased that the first bill I’m introducing as your Congresswoman is for our veterans,” said Halvorson. “As you know, these issues are a great passion of mine and I applaud all of you who work so hard to advocate for our veterans,” said Halvorson.”

As Halvorson listened to concerns of the committee, she spoke of members in her family who’ve served, including her step-son who is currently recovering from critical injuries sustained in Afghanistan. She also described The Disabled Veterans’ Health Care Fairness Act which prohibits the collection of co-payments and other fees for medical and/or nursing home care from veterans who are in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system - and are catastrophically disabled from non-service related cases.

“Catastrophically disabled” veterans are classified as those who have a severe and permanent condition that compromises their ability to carry out activities of daily living. They require assistance and constant supervision to avoid harm to themselves or others.

“It just seems ridiculous that our veterans with catastrophic disabilities are asked to pay health care fees and co-payments,” said Congresswoman Halvorson. “This bill insures this will no

longer happen - and should help alleviate their financial burden. They deserve no less.”

Along with the introduction of the Disabled Veterans’ Health Care Fairness Act, one of Halvorson’s first actions as Congresswoman was to create the 11th District Veterans Advisory Committee. Former 11th district congressional candidate Jason Wallace of Bloomington has agreed to chair the group. Other members include: Ken Buck of Morris; Marty Rue of Peru; Tara Wells of Manteno; Fred Tetters of Kankakee; Jim Denbow of Shorewood; Wayne Horne of Joliet; Tanya Austin of Bloomington; Dick Campbell of Kankakee; Tim Pfaff of Morris; Jim Canup of Braidwood; Lou Vargas of Crest Hill; Jerri Andrew of Bloomington; Robert Doyle of Princeton; and on Miner of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

“I’m extremely excited about this committee and created it to insure a strong two-way communication on issues affecting veterans in my district. I am committed to veterans and look forward to working with them and being their voice in Washington,” said Halvorson who also serves on the U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee.

END

* Co-Sponsor List

Rep. Bob Filner

Del. Madeleine Bordallo

Rep. Travis Childers

Rep. Gerry Connolly

Rep. Bill Delahunt

Rep. Martin Heinrich

Rep. Marcy Kaptur

Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy

Rep. Larry Kissell

Rep. Steve LaTourette

Rep. Glenn Nye

Del. Pedro Pierluisi

Rep. Jared Polis

Rep. Ben Ray Luján

Rep. Mike Ross

Del. Gregorio Sablan

Rep. Tim Walz